

REMARKS

This is intended as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated March 25, 2004, having a shortened statutory period for response set to expire on June 25, 2004. Claims 1-24 are pending in the application. Claims 1-24 remain pending following entry of this response. Claims 1, 14, and 19 have been amended. Please reconsider the claims pending in the application for reasons discussed below.

Substance Of Examiner Interview

The following is a summary of the substance of a telephonic interview conducted on June 14, 2004 with the Examiner and Applicants' representative (Randol Read). Limitations and/or elements present in the independent claims regarding autonomous operations for updating timestamps (operations that occur without software intervention) were discussed. Applicants' representative submitted that the cited references, whether taken alone or in combination, fail to teach the elements discussed. Claim amendments intended to clarify the autonomous features were also discussed and Applicants have amended the claims accordingly.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

Claims 14, 17, 18 and 19-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Benkeser et al.* (US 5,361,362, hereinafter *Benkeser*). Applicants traverse this rejection as follows.

Each of these claims contains elements directed to autonomous timestamp updates (without interaction from any central processing unit or complex processor system). Applicants respectfully submit, however, that *Benkeser* is directed to a method for adaptive job scheduling that requires processor interaction. *Benkeser* teaches that when a process is returned to a master process queue, the value of a counter register is included to reflect the holding time (Col. 5, lines 45-48). *Benkeser* further teaches that a processor handles resetting of a hardware timer (Col. 5, Lines 42-45) and the processor is also the entity that uses the timer in returning the process to the process queue (Col. 6, Lines 32-35). Thus, *Benkeser* does not teach that the updating of the timestamp is conducted autonomously from any central processing unit or complex processor

system, as claimed. Accordingly, Applicants submit that the claims are patentable over *Benkeser* and respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

Claims 1, 2, 6 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Benkeser* in view of *Hurvig et al.* (US 6,507,592, hereinafter *Hurvig*). Claim 1 recites that a location for storing a timestamp is written and that the updating of the timestamp is conducted autonomously and without firmware interaction. Applicants submit that neither *Benkeser* nor *Hurvig*, taken alone or in combination teach autonomous timestamp updating, as claimed. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claim 1 is patentable over *Benkeser* and *Hurvig*. Claims 2, 6, and 7 each depend from claim 1 and, therefore, each contain the same limiting features as independent claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 2, 6, and 7 are each patentable over *Benkeser* and *Hurvig*, and request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 3, 4 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Benkeser* in view of *Hurvig* and further in view of *Matsuzaki* (US 6,253,305). Claim 8 recites that a contents of a location in memory used for storing a timestamp are read back and updated with hardware based operations (without firmware interaction). Applicants submit that neither *Benkeser*, *Hurvig*, nor *Matsuzaki* taken alone or in combination teach reading and updating a timestamp with hardware operations, as claimed. Thus, Applicants submit that claim 8 is patentable over *Benkeser*, *Hurvig*, and *Matsuzaki*. Applicants further submit that claim 1 is patentable over *Benkeser*, *Hurvig*, and *Matsuzaki* for similar reasons. Claims 3 and 4 each depend from claim 1 and, therefore, each contain the same limiting features as independent claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants submit that claims 3 and 4 are each patentable over *Benkeser*, *Hurvig*, and *Matsuzaki*, and request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claim 5 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Benkeser et al.* in view of *Hurvig et al.* as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of *Bhatt et al.* (US 4,636,967, hereinafter *Bhatt*). Claim 5 is dependent from claim 1 which, Applicants submit is patentable over *Hurvig* and *Benkeser* for reasons explained above. Applicants also submit that the teachings of *Bhatt* do not affect the patentability of claim

1. Therefore, as claim 5 is dependent from claim 1, and contains all the limiting features thereof, Applicants also submit that claim 5 is patentable over *Hurvig*, *Benkeser*, and *Bhatt* and respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 15 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Benkeser et al.*, as applied to claim 14 above, in view of *Matsuzaki et al.* Claims 15 and 16 are dependent from claim 14 which, Applicants submit is patentable over *Benkeser* for reasons explained above. Applicants also submit that the teachings of *Matsuzaki* do not affect the patentability of claim 14. Therefore, as claims 15 and 16 are dependent from claim 14, and contain all the limiting features thereof, Applicants also submit that claims 15 and 16 are patentable over *Benkeser*, and *Matsuzaki* and respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

CONCLUSION

The secondary references made of record are noted. However, it is believed that the secondary references are no more pertinent to the Applicants' disclosure than the primary references cited in the office action. Therefore, Applicants believe that a detailed discussion of the secondary references is not necessary for a full and complete response to this office action.

Having addressed all issues set out in the office action, Applicants respectfully submit that the claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request that the claims be allowed.

Respectfully submitted,

Randol W. Read
Registration No. 43,876
MOSER, PATTERSON & SHERIDAN, L.L.P.
3040 Post Oak Blvd. Suite 1500
Houston, TX 77056
Telephone: (713) 623-4844
Facsimile: (713) 623-4846
Attorney for Applicant(s)